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DEPT FOR T, VCI AND EUR/PRA  
DOE FOR NNSA/NA-24  
CIA FOR WINPAC  
JCS FOR J5/DDGSA  
SECDEF FOR OSD(P)/STRATCAP  
NAVY FOR CNO-N5JA AND DIRSSP  
AIRFORCE FOR HQ USAF/ASX AND ASXP  
DTRA FOR OP-OS OP-OSA AND DIRECTOR  
NSC FOR LOOK  
DIA FOR LEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/21/2019  
TAGS: [KACT](#) [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [US](#) [START](#)  
SUBJECT: START FOLLOW-ON NEGOTIATIONS, GENEVA (SFO-GVA-V):  
(U) START FOLLOW-ON CONVERSION OR ELIMINATION AND  
NOTIFICATIONS WORKING GROUP MEETING, OCTOBER 1, 2009

REF: GENEVA 00811 (SFO-GVA-V-024)

Classified By: A/S Rose E. Gottemoeller, United States  
START Negotiator. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is SFO-GVA-V-031.

[1](#)2. (U) Meeting Date: October 1, 2009  
Time: 3:20 p.m. -5:15 p.m.  
Place: U.S. Mission, Geneva

#### SUMMARY

[1](#)3. (S) The fourth meeting of the Conversion or Elimination (C or E) Working Group (WG) was held at the U.S. Mission on October 1, 2009.

[1](#)4. (S) The U.S. and Russian delegations discussed differences on how to treat nuclear capable strategic offensive arms (SOAs) that had been modified to become non-nuclear capable. The U.S. side said that, in the U.S. view, SOAs rendered non-nuclear would not be subject to either the provisions or the broader limitations of the treaty, while the Russian side maintained that SOAs rendered non-nuclear would continue to be SOAs and remain subject to the provisions, but not central limits, of the treaty.

[1](#)5. (S) One of the main areas of progress was the determination between the Parties to begin to identify "key" mandatory procedures that must be included in the elimination process for each kind of SOA, with a choice of optional procedures to complete the elimination.

16. (S) As in other WGs, the Russian side continued to push for a "third tier" treaty document into which they propose to place most of the detailed procedures that the U.S. side has proposed to place in the Elimination Protocol.

17. (S) There were indications from the Russian side that they might be willing to consider a marginally expanded role for inspections to confirm conversion or elimination procedures, rather than just national technical means (NTM), which to this point had been their main approach.

WHAT IS THE "KEY": PROCEDURES  
FOR ELIMINATION

18. (S) Mr. Elliott summarized the WG's progress to date. One of the main areas of progress was the determination between the Parties to begin to identify "key" mandatory procedures that must be included in the elimination process for each kind of SOA, with a choice of optional procedures to complete the elimination. Elliott explained that for each kind of SOA there would be a specific required step in the elimination procedure. For example, for elimination of silo launchers for ICBMs, he suggested that the removal of the silo door could be an example of a key, mandatory procedure. Elliott explained that after the required procedure was completed, there could be several defined procedures in the Elimination Protocol that could be used to complete the elimination process. He gave examples of excavating or exploding the silo headworks or completely filling the silo with gravel. A third option to complete the elimination

would be "other procedures" developed by the possessing Party.

19. (S) Elliott gave examples of procedures for elimination of SLBM launchers, heavy bombers, and ICBMs and SLBMs. For SLBM launcher elimination, Elliott suggested a key procedure could be the destruction of the launcher hatch. Ryzhkov suggested that for eliminating heavy bombers, a key procedure could be the destruction of a basic design element, which he described as destroying any portion of the fuselage, e.g., cutting off the tail or nose of the heavy bomber or cutting off half of the wings. He clarified that these cuts must not be at assembly joints. For the elimination of ICBMs and SLBMs, Elliott suggested a key procedure could be removing the propellant; additional procedures to complete the elimination could be destroying the missile's first stage casing or the casings of all the other stages of the missile.

The Russian side believed that removing the propellant sufficed for solid-fuel missiles, and that no additional procedures were necessary. For liquid-fueled missiles, Ryzhkov said the key procedure would be cutting the case. For mobile launchers, Ryzhkov said the key element would be the erector-launcher, not the ICBM, and that the guidance system and the equipment boxes would be removed from the missile. The self-leveling jacks would remain so that the eliminated chassis could be used as a crane, if desired. Mr. Smirnov clarified that only the erector mechanism needed to be destroyed. Elliott suggested that the mandatory procedures could be formally agreed upon at the next session.

THE "THIRD TIER"

110. (S) After discussing some of the "key" procedures, Ryzhkov immediately began to advocate for the creation of a "third tier" within the treaty in which to place most of the detailed procedures, particularly the optional elimination procedures. Similar to the Russian proposal in other WGs, Ryzhkov proposed to put many of the details into a third tier. The procedures in the third tier would be agreed to at the level of the Bilateral Consultative Commission (BCC). Ryzhkov said the Russian side would try to prepare example documents using this method for presentation at the next session. Later in the discussions, Ryzhkov displayed a portion of a Russian revision of the U.S.-proposed Elimination Protocol, on which was indicated the paragraphs

that would be moved to the third tier. He did not provide a copy of that document.

¶11. (S) Elliott inquired about the legal status of this third tier concept and asked whether the procedures contained in it were legally binding for both Parties. Ryzhkov responded that previous decisions taken in the Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission (JCIC) would serve as an example; the procedures agreed to during JCIC sessions were binding. Both Parties agreed that its respective lawyers needed to review this issue.QCONVERSION: ONCE AN SOA, ALWAYS AN SOA

¶12. (S) There continued to be a divergence of views between the Parties in the concept of conversion of SOAs. Elliott clarified that the U.S. proposal, while using only the term

"elimination," contained concepts similar to the Russian proposal for conversion. Both proposals allowed for applying procedures to a nuclear-capable system that would render it non-nuclear capable. Ryzhkov opined that the Parties' proposals were in fact not entirely similar, and emphasized that the Russian side was categorically against conversion of SOAs into non-SOAs, which would remove the item from the limitations of the treaty. As an example, the Russian side believed that a nuclear ICBM must never become a conventionally-armed ICBM.

¶13. (S) Elliott rejoined that he was not referring to deployment of conventionally-armed ICBMs. Elliott asked whether the Russian concept would allow for conversion of an SLBM launcher into a cruise missile launcher. Col Zaitsev responded that the Russian side understood that the U.S. proposal would exclude any provisions for conversion of SOA and only provided for the elimination of SOA in a way in which the item could no longer be used for its original purpose, and then the item would no longer be subject to the limitations of the treaty. Zaitsev said this would lead to unacceptable consequences. Zaitsev then gave an example of how an "eliminated" SLBM launcher could be modified so as to be incapable of being used for its original purpose, and yet become another type of a launcher. He contended that such a modified item might even become better and more capable than the original, and yet not be subject to the limitations of the treaty.

¶14. (S) Zaitsev continued that elimination must mean a physical destruction of an item and must be irreversible. A "light reworking" of nuclear-capable SOA into non-nuclear capable SOA was, to the Russian side, "conversion" and would continue to be considered SOA and remain under the purview of the treaty. He opined that abandoning the term "conversion" would lead to a "Pandora's Box" of problems. When the Russian side examined the U.S.-proposed Elimination Protocol, they concluded that the inclusion of the term "conversion" was unavoidable.

¶15. (S) The Russian side provided a document containing its definitions for the terms "elimination" and "conversion." Elliott stated that the U.S. side would analyze the proposed definitions, but at first glance, they appeared similar in concept to the U.S. understanding. He noted that the principle difference was that the United States considered that SOAs rendered non-nuclear capable would not be subject to the limitations of the treaty, while the Russian side maintained that SOAs rendered non-nuclear would remain subject to the limitations, but not central limits, of the treaty.

¶16. (S) Begin text of official translation of the Russian paper:

To be Turned over to the  
U.S. Side

Paper of the Russian Side  
October 1, 2009

### Working Group III

#### Proposal of the Russian Side for the Wording of Terms

Elimination - action taken in regard to ICBMs, SLBMs, heavy bombers, ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and their elements, and in regard to the infrastructure of SOA facilities, as a result of which those items and facilities can no longer be used as an SOA item or facility.

Conversion - a change in the structure (see Translator Note) of an ICBM, an SLBM, their launchers, and a heavy bomber, as a result of which those items can no longer be used for their original purpose, but continue to be subject to the provisions of this Treaty.

Translator Note: The Russian word used here ("konstruktsiya") can mean either "design" or "structure." In the START Treaty and related documents it is consistently rendered as "design." However, in the context of converting existing SOAs, it appears that "structure" is more appropriate.

End text.

¶17. (S) Elliott asked for several points of clarification on the proposed Russian definitions of "elimination" and "conversion." Ryzhkov said the definition was the Russian delegation's attempt to make the concept easy to understand, and should be included in the definitions annex once agreed between the Parties. Ryzhkov explained that Russia's reference to elimination of SLBM launchers and their "elements" of SLBM launchers meant the missile launch tube hatch and additional components such as gas generators. For ICBM launchers, one of the key items was the silo door.

¶18. (S) Col Ilin emphasized that an elimination was more severe than a conversion, and to illustrate his point, asked whether the U.S. side could "re-convert" an item to make it nuclear capable again. Elliott responded that in theory, it was possible, but it was certainly not the U.S. intent to reverse a conversion process. He told Ilin that the U.S.-proposed procedures would allow for a B-52 to be modified to become non-nuclear capable, yet still be able to employ conventional munitions. This would save significant amounts of money compared to destroying a B-52 and developing a new system. Ilin opined that it would not be too difficult to reconvert the heavy bomber to become nuclear capable.

IS NTM ENOUGH?

¶19. (S) Elliott turned the discussion to verification, and stated that NTM could confirm some procedures, but would be inadequate to confirm others. In such instances, inspections would be required. Ryzhkov agreed with the logic of Elliott's statement, but emphasized that if an inspection took place, the inspectors would not observe the process but only the completed elimination. Ryzhkov understood the U.S. position was that inspections would be required for each elimination. Ryzhkov reminded the U.S. side that the Russian proposal included provisions for inspection-like "visits," during which inspectors could confirm the elimination, although the Parties would have to be very selective due to the limited allocations of such visits. Ryzhkov repeated the Russian stance against observing the entire process of

eliminations for ICBMs for road mobile launchers and mobile launchers of ICBMs.

¶20. (S) Documents exchanged:

Russia:

-- Non-paper, "Proposal of the Russian Side on the Language of Terms," dated October 1, 2009.

¶21. (S) Participants:

U.S.

Mr. Elliott  
Lt Col Blevins  
Ms. Bosco  
LCDR Brons  
Lt Col Comeau  
Mr. Dwyer  
Dr. Fraley  
Mr. Hanchett  
LTC Leyde  
Mr. McConnell  
Ms. Purcell  
Mr. Siemon  
Mr. Strauss  
Ms. Gross(Int)

RUSSIA

Col Ryzhkov  
Col Ilin  
Col Izrazov  
Col Kamenskiy  
Mr. Kostyuchenko  
Mr. Smirnov  
Col Zaitsev  
Ms. Komshilova (Int)

¶22. (U) Gottemoeller sends.  
RICHTER